

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009*

**Remarks at a Reception Honoring World Ambassadors**

*July 27, 2009*

Hello. Thank you very much. Well, I want to welcome all of you to the White House. Michelle and I are honored to host you here tonight to get to know you and to underscore the importance of cooperation between our nations.

Now, diplomacy has always been critically important to all nations. But in many ways, it grows more important with each passing year, because the interconnectedness of our world means that in the 21st century, we cannot solve our problems until we solve them together. For centuries, diplomats have come together to discuss war and peace, commerce and exchange. But now it is hard to think of an issue that matters to our people that does not depend in some way upon cooperation among nations: health and education, energy, the environment, the arts, and even athletics.

And that's one reason why I came into office with a strong commitment to renew American diplomacy and to start a new era of engagement with the world. This must be a moment when we engage on the basis of mutual interest and mutual respect, so that we can build new partnerships for progress. And it is in that spirit that I welcome all of you here tonight.

I'm also pleased that we've put together an extraordinary team to lead America's diplomacy. I have an extraordinary Secretary of State in Hillary Clinton. I'm so pleased to have Susan Rice, our talented Ambassador to the United Nations, here with us tonight, as well as our outstanding Trade Representative, Ron Kirk. And I couldn't be more proud of the job that American diplomats are doing around the world as well.

In the months and years ahead, I know that we are going to do important work with each of you. We will depend on you to connect us to your Government, to help make progress on our common challenges, and to build bridges among our people.

Of course, one of the wonderful things about America is that so much of the world is represented in our own cities and towns. I think we likely have immigrants who have come to our shores from every country that is represented here tonight. In fact, my own hometown of Chicago is probably pretty close to being able to make that claim all by itself. *[Laughter]*

I hope that you all know that this fact guides our respect for different peoples, for different cultures, and for different countries. For here in America we see the capacity for people from all corners of the world to come together to advance their common dreams.

Of course, I'm mindful that many of you have been in Washington longer than I have, so some of you already know your way around. But whether you've been here for years, or whether this is your first time in the White House, I hope you feel welcome. I look forward to working together to advance the peace and prosperity of the people not only of the United States but also people all around the world.

So thank you very much. Have a wonderful evening. We'll see you soon.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 28.

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